



# The Ryburn Christian Clarion

BIBLICAL STUDIES RESOURCE

*Upholding the Accuracy of the God-Breathed Word*

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[ryburnclarion2@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ryburnclarion2@sbcglobal.net); [www.godslivingroom.com](http://www.godslivingroom.com)

Unless otherwise stated, all passages are quoted from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible. All explanatory remarks by a writer within scripture verses are enclosed in brackets [ ].

## PRAYER:

### BASIC TO LOVING SERVICE

**S**EARCH THE VARIED CULTURES and religions of the world, and you will find that prayer is an essential element of almost every belief system that has ever existed. Even those individuals involved in idolatry and Devil worship recognize the importance and necessity of prayer in developing intimate communion with that which is being worshipped. Of course, prayer itself was introduced to man by the God of the Bible, and from there it was corrupted, and adapted, to suit the requirements of false beliefs.

For those of us who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's instructions concerning prayer in the New Testament, and especially in the Church Epistles, are most significant. Christians are told to believe to receive when they pray (Mark 11:24). They are instructed to be thankful, as well (Phil. 4:6). Furthermore, as believers, we are encouraged to approach God in prayer with great confidence and boldness (Heb. 4:16). So, you see, many facets of prayer are set before us in God's Word. Here, however, I want to briefly look at the need to *persevere*, especially in our private prayer lives.

In the Book of Romans, the foundational doctrine for believers today, the Apostle Paul first sets the example for dedicated, persistent prayer by praying for the saints at Rome "without ceasing," or "very consistently." As a man

*continued on next page...*

#### INSIDE AT A GLANCE

**HERE WE GO AGAIN!** We've a brand new year ahead of us, with a fresh opportunity to walk with our God, and share His magnificent Word with others. May the Father guide and inspire our outreach endeavors.

**"PRAYER: BASIC TO LOVING SERVICE"** is a simple look at how we, as the children of the Almighty, often fail to recognize the tremendous deliverance available to God's people through consistent and concerted prayer.

*by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief.....1*

**"GOD'S MATCHLESS WORD"** presents what we think will be a treat for our readers. In "**This Grace Wherein We Stand**", we will see that we have a "vouchsafed spiritual position" in Christ, established by God Himself.

*by Eric Shimkus.....3*

**"FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT"** is presented, this time, for those who long to have a more intimate fellowship with the Heavenly Father. In the article "**Abba, Father**", we learn that tender communion with God is certainly available.

*by Nathan R. James.....4*

**"FROM THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT"**: Since antediluvian times, many have believed that power and spiritual abilities could be imparted to men through sacred blades. "**The Sword Of The Spirit**" unfolds the source of *real* power.

*by Keith Jamison, Columnist.....6*

**"GOD AND COUNTRY"** looks at a lethargic Europe, just rousing itself from a millennium of spiritual slumber. "**New Light For The New World**" shows how God preserved His Word as another expression of love for His people.

*by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief.....8*

Send comments to [ryburnclarion2@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ryburnclarion2@sbcglobal.net).

of God, according to Romans 1:9, he not only taught the saints concerning prayer, but also demonstrated its potential by his behavior. Paul told the saints, "...I make mention of you always in my prayers..." giving them an example to follow.

In Colossians 4:12, we can observe another believer, in his personal prayer life, going to great lengths to intercede for the saints of Colossae. This time, it's simply a "...servant of Christ..." named Epaphras. According to The Word, Epaphras was "...always labouring fervently..." in prayers for others. It's one thing to pray in agreement with the whole assembly of saints; it's quite another to intercede for others privately, when nobody knows about it except God. This kind of prayer support stems from a heart of love and service, for there is no one around to impress, or to give you a pat on the back. Only God knows, and service like this to the Body of Christ is a sacrifice of love.

Take note of the superlatives that describe Epaphras' commitment to prayer: "always labouring fervently." For this man, there was nothing casual or flippant about prayer. When he approached the Father, he "locked in" mentally and spiritually. Note also that he requested that the saints might "...stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." While there's nothing wrong with praying for health or prosperity, God wants us to realize the value of believing for spiritual things, as well. The loving service of Epaphras to the believers was such that God deemed it worthy of mention in the Scriptures. It behooves us to pay attention.

Another wonderful citation of committed and concerted prayer can be found in I Thessalonians. Here, Paul, Silvanus (Silas), and Timotheus (Timothy) express their longing for the Christians at Thessalonica. In chapter 3, verse 10, we discover that they prayed "exceedingly," night and day, so they "...might perfect that which is lacking in...[their]...faith..." Again, note the request made of God in their supplications: that they might be able to help the saints believe more perfectly. Do you think the Father is trying to tell us something?

Ephesians 6:18 is, perhaps, one of the finest examples of continual, aggressive prayer on behalf of other saints. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," it reads, "and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints..." This verse is so loaded with insights that we need only touch on a few to observe the depth of persistent prayer to which God has called us.

First of all, we are to pray "always": when assembled with the saints, when we have scheduled private prayer time, AND when God inspires us to do

so. "Supplication" appears twice in the verse, as something God would have emphasized. In this case, it denotes "an earnest expression to ward off evil," and is to be employed with "all perseverance." Once more, we observe dedicated, heartfelt prayer, not for material things, but for the protection of fellow believers. Do you see a pattern here?

Very few of us in modern times have ever tapped into the kind of prayer we've been noting in God's Word. I'm not simply talking about persistent, fervent prayer that seeks spiritual rather than material blessings. I'm speaking also of prayer that leads to a depth of communion with the Father that is largely unknown to modern Christians. It was surely enjoyed by the saints of old, because their culture was steeped in such things. On the other hand, for those of us who have absorbed the "fast-food" pace of contemporary society, it's a bit more difficult, but IT IS AVAILABLE!

This would be something worth pursuing in this new year. Unselfish prayer in one's private prayer time is a fundamental way of loving and serving one another in Christ. No one can get puffed up over something nobody else can see. Think of the benefits to the Body of Christ. Why not stand together, as we pray as individuals, and watch God move?

Now, I want to take a moment, as we do in every winter issue, to thank those who have contributed articles to our "**God's Matchless Word**" column during the past year. The first article, entitled "**Crossroads In Life**" (Spring, 2006; Vol. III, No. 3), dealt with looking to God when facing a major decision, and was penned by Steven J. Hall of Dayton, Ohio. In "**Three, Two, One,...Action!**" (Summer, 2006; Vol. III, No. 4) by Rhonda C. West, the secretary of *Akribos Theological Seminary* in Huber Heights, Ohio, we examined God's continual call to "do" His Word. "**Our Rights In Christ**", which explored major benefits of being a child of God, was featured next (Fall, 2006; Vol. IV, No. 1), submitted by Michael Burrows, a student at Colorado State University. Finally, in this Winter, 2007 issue (Vol. IV, No. 2), we offer "**This Grace Wherein We Stand**", an examination of Romans 5:2, by Eric Shimkus of Tipp City, Ohio. To all these wonderful Bible students, we extend our appreciation.

In closing, we would be remiss if we neglected those who faithfully underwrite our efforts. These folks, along with our distributors, who use their own time and gasoline to see that the *Clarion* is placed in over 68 locations in 18 states, make this all possible. To all who, in every way, support this work, we say, "Thanks."

-----by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief

# **GOD'S MATCHLESS WORD:**

## *A Forum For Presenting The Light Of Life*

*(This column features a wide range of subjects from God's Word as they are set forth by a host of preachers and teachers from differing avenues of Christian thought and various areas of Biblical study and concern.)*

### **“ ‘This Grace Wherein We Stand’ ”**

*by Eric Shimkus*

**E**VOKING THOUGHTS OF BEAUTY, charm, virtue, and propriety, “grace” is an intriguing word. Biblically, God’s grace refers to His “divine, unmerited favor.” God’s favor is unmerited because we don’t deserve it and haven’t earned it. Romans 5:1 and 2 states, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

To be “justified” is to be declared righteous; it is the result of God’s legal verdict being rendered. *Noah Webster’s 1828 American Dictionary* defines “justify” as, “To pardon and clear from guilt; to absolve or acquit from guilt and merited punishment; and to accept as righteous on account of the merits of the Savior, or by the application of Christ’s atonement to the offender.” Literally, it is being released from the penalty of sin. How is it that an unsaved, natural man can receive God Almighty’s justification and be released from this penalty?

#### **Romans 3: 21-25**

*But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;*

*Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:*

*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;*

In verse 22, the text reads, “...the righteousness of God...” Just how righteous is God? Those who are born again of God’s spirit have been declared righteous by God Himself, having His own righteousness (II Cor. 5:21). According to Romans 3:24, it was “freely” given, thus, the only “burden” we must bear is in Romans 10:9 and 10, where God beautifully sets forth

what we must believe in order to receive this justification.

#### **Romans 10:9 and 10**

*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

*For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

Since the ultimate price for our salvation has been paid by Jesus Christ, we need only believe God’s Word. Having now a better understanding of justification, we will revisit Romans 5.

#### **Romans 5:1 and 2**

*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

*By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

The words “being justified” are rendered from one word in the Greek, *dikaiothentes*. It is better translated “having been justified,” which more clearly conveys that this action is in the past tense. Our justification is an accomplished reality; in today’s terms, it’s a “done deal!” “Having been justified,” then, results in three truths that are set forth in these two verses.

First, we have peace with God; we are no longer “enemies” of God, as Romans 5:10 reveals. Secondly, and the central theme of this article, we “...have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand...” Lastly, we rejoice “...in hope of the glory of God.” We anticipate our eternal life, and living with God in His glory.

“By whom,” in Romans 5:2, refers to Jesus Christ, for all the blessings we have as God’s children come through Him. The phrase “...also we have access...” reveals the intimacy we may enjoy with God. The word “access” is from the Greek word *prosagoge*, which means, “to lead or conduct to, bring, to conduct to the presence of,” or “to procure access for.” Have you ever imagined having access to a world leader or an important celebrity? Access like this is very limited,

and those granted access feel more important for having it. Now, imagine standing in God's company: "hanging out backstage" with Him, so to speak. In truth, you CAN! Jesus Christ has secured for us an "all-access pass," which we may use anytime, as often as we like. We have access to God Almighty, and His throne of grace.

### **Ephesians 2:18; and 3:12**

*For through him [Jesus Christ] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*

*In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him [Jesus Christ].*

God absolutely wants us to know that we have access to Him. Again, consider the word "grace": divine, unmerited favor (Rom. 5:2). Here, it is the Greek word *charin*, the accusative singular form of *charis*. *Moulton's Analytical Greek Lexicon* defines it as, "grace, a graciously vouchsafed spiritual position." Note these words: "vouchsafed spiritual position."

Completing the phrase from Romans 5:2, let's examine the word "stand." It means, "to cause or make to stand; to place, put, or set." The Greek word used here does not refer to the quality of the individual believer's stand. Instead, it indicates the individual being placed in a position by another. God has caused us to "stand" in His grace. He has placed us in a position where, as legally justified sons, we are in a "vouchsafed spiritual position" within His divine favor. God's Word is literally filled with gems of grace like these: a veritable treasure trove for us to mine.

### **II Corinthians 9:8**

*And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:*

### **Ephesians 1:7; and 2:5, 7 and 8**

*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*

*That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*

*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

### **Hebrews 4:16**

*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

It is man's nature to repudiate grace. We tend to reject the possibility that God can be so BIG. Romans 10:17 teaches that "...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." We must believe The Word, and nothing but The Word, for it is where God makes Himself and His grace known to us (II Tim. 3:16).

Romans declares the great, redemptive work of Christ, the Gospel of God. Indeed, our salvation is of grace, and not of works, for there is nothing anyone could ever do to deserve that which God has so freely given. He has placed us in a position within His grace where, having been freed from the penalty of sin and guilt, He has caused us to "stand."\*

*(Mr. Eric Shimkus began his serious study of God's Word over twenty-five years ago. Recently, he has been presenting an ongoing, detailed consideration of the Book of Romans in Studies In God's Power, the quarterly journal of Akribos Theological Seminary. You may review the journal at [www.akribos.org](http://www.akribos.org). Eric and his wife, Alisa, presently live in Tipp City, Ohio.)*

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## **FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT**

### **Essay**

*(This column offers our readers a variety of inspirational and edifying submissions. In this "grab-bag," appearing from time to time, you will find essays, book reviews, testimonies, poetry, letters, and other things designed to exhort and comfort God's people.)*

## **“ ‘Abba, Father’ ”**

*by Nathan R. James*

**D** ID YOU EVER ASK YOURSELF, "Why did God create the earth?" I have, and I've seen the answer in God's Word. In Genesis, we see clearly that the world was made for mankind. Indeed, even the stars, so very far away, are there for us.

### **Genesis 1:14 and 15**

*And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:*

*And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.*

The sun, moon, and stars were all made for mankind, to give us light, and seasons, and days, and years, and to be signs showing God's master plan. The stars announced the birth of Jesus Christ. That's how the wise men knew to come looking for "...he that is born King of the Jews..." (Matt. 2:2) It wasn't because God lacked servants that He made the earth. He had the angels

to serve Him, and to acknowledge Him as God. What was it, then, that God gained in mankind? It was the father-son relationship. That is something God did not have with the angels.

### **Hebrews 1:5**

*For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?*

God's heart's desire was fulfilled in mankind, but not in every man and woman. Although some teach that everyone is a child of God, this is not what God says in His Word. God has said that Jesus Christ is His firstborn. Christ, Whose birth was foretold in the Scriptures, and heralded from the sky, was the first to truly be God's Son. He is called the "only begotten" Son of God (John 3:16) because He is the only one Who is God's Son by physical birth. The Scriptures testify to the closeness of the Father and the Son.

### **John 11:42a; and 16:32**

*And I knew that thou hearest me always:... Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.*

Jesus Christ had great confidence in His relationship with His Father, and He and God looked forward to a whole family of sons.

### **Romans 8:29**

*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [His Son] might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

Who now makes up this family; who are these "many brethren"? They are the men and women whom God knew would believe in Jesus Christ. These are the sons for whom God lovingly prepared the earth. When you and I believed and confessed Jesus as the Lord, we became born again. Now, we are brothers of Jesus Christ and, truly, sons of God.

The Lord has left us a phrase in The Word that highlights the closeness of this father-son relationship which He so longed for throughout the ages. This phrase is, "Abba, Father." It is rather amazing that the word *abba* has been preserved, and even carried into our modern English Bibles. *Abba* is an Aramaic word, and it was transliterated into Greek letters when it was written in the Greek manuscripts. It was later transliterated into English letters. It is a foreign word that God has preserved to draw our attention, and it shows us something amazing.

The Greek word for "father" is *pater*, and it has a broad usage. *Pater* could mean a father, or an ancestor, or a respected elder, or the inventor/originator of something. It was also used as a title of honor for teachers, and even members of the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of ancient Israel. The Hebrew and Aramaic word that is equivalent to

*pater* is *ab*. *Ab* is very formal, and was used in ways similar to those mentioned for *pater*. *Abba* (from *ab*), on the other hand, was used very specifically of one's actual father. It is more intimate, like the English word "daddy." Some scholars say that Jesus, Who spoke Aramaic, not Greek, referred to God as His *abba* frequently. Speaking to God in such an informal and familiar way would have been seen as disrespectful by the religious leaders of the time. That's because the Jews never spoke to God as their father. Throughout the Old Testament, the believers' relationship to God was that of servants to their lord. Jesus Christ, however, was God's only begotten Son. He had every right to call His Father, "Daddy."

There is only one place where *abba* is recorded in the Scriptures as being spoken by a man to God. That is in the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus Christ prayed privately to His Father before His crucifixion.

### **Mark 14:36**

*And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.*

This is not flowery, poetic speech. This is not a lengthy and ornate prayer. This is God's Son coming to His Father with a heavy heart, saying, "Father (Dad), if there is any other way...." If it were possible, Jesus didn't want to be scourged and mocked; He didn't want to be beaten and crucified; He didn't WANT to die. He went to God with the simplicity of a child to his father, his daddy. "Nevertheless," He said, "not what I will, but what thou wilt." He made His decision to follow God's plan.

Although this is the only place in the Bible where Jesus is recorded as saying, "Abba, Father," amazingly, this phrase occurs two more times in The Word. Upon whose lips has God put these words?

### **Galatians 4:6**

*And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

We, who have been saved according to Romans 10:9, and are born again of incorruptible seed (I Pet. 1:23), are now sons of God (I John 3:2). The essential part of this is the holy spirit that God gave us at the moment we believed. It is a "sonship" spirit, and it is by this spirit that we can call God our *abba*, "daddy."

The final occurrence of *abba* is in Romans 8. Here, again, we are told about the spirit we have received. In the King James Version, it is called a "...Spirit of adoption (*huiiothesia*),...." Adoption, however, is a poor translation of the Greek word *huiiothesia*. The problem is that we don't have an exact English word that matches it. It actually means, "the quality or state of being a son," or "sonship." The term was applied to adoptions during ancient Roman times, and that sense of the word has carried over into our English Bibles. According to Roman law, a man would give the *huiiothesia* to another, thereby making him a son by adoption.

**Romans 8:15**

*For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the ["a"] Spirit of adoption [or "sonship"], whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

Interestingly, under the law of the times, a Roman citizen could legally disown a son by birth. If the son was a disappointment or a disgrace, the father could disown and disinherit him. If the man, however, picked out someone and made him his son by giving him the *huiiothesia*, he could never disown him. The thinking may have been that he knew in advance what he was getting into.

Brothers and sisters, God knew what He was getting into when He made us His sons. He knew who we were, and who we would become. He foreknew us, as we have

seen from Romans 8:29. He chose us, knowing what blessings we will be to Him in the ages to come. We can never disappoint God, and He will never disown us. He has written it in His Word, which He magnified above all His name (Ps. 138:2b). We are children of God, and no matter what, we can come to Him with open hearts and child-like simplicity. Just like our Lord and elder brother, Jesus Christ, by the spirit, we, too, can say, "Abba, Father."\*

*(Mr. Nathan R. James was brought up in a Christian home, and in 2001 he became active in ministry service. During 2005-2006, Nathan participated in "The Fellow Laborers" program offered by Christian Family Fellowship Ministry of Tipp City, Ohio. Presently, he serves as CFFM's audio engineer.)*

You may e-mail the *Clarion* at.....[ryburnclarion2@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ryburnclarion2@sbcglobal.net).

**This issue of the *Clarion* is dedicated in memory of the 38<sup>th</sup> president of the United States of America, GERALD RUDOLPH FORD. (1913-2006)**

## **FROM THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT**

*(This column, featuring the work of Keith Jamison, examines God's Word and how its application in our Twenty-First Century lives has been influenced by mythology, philosophy, and tradition.)*

### **“ ‘The Sword Of The Spirit’ ”**

**L**ET'S TALK ABOUT THE "sword of the spirit." This phrase is used only in Ephesians, and is one of the resources we are to take as we put on the "...whole armour of God,...." (Eph. 6:11) We will discover what this "sword" is, and what it means to us. We will also investigate actual swords, and their symbolic meanings.

First off, what is a sword? Simply put, a sword is a long knife. In fact, the difference between a long knife and a short sword is in the eye of the beholder. There is no true distinction between them. Our modern word, "sword," comes from the Old English word *sweord*, a weapon which cuts or stabs. The type of weapon this word refers to depends on one's cultural heritage. For most modern, Western societies, the popular image is that of a long (3-5 feet), straight, two-edged blade, like the one pictured in our *Clarion* logo. Two thousand years ago, however, the Greeks held a different image.

In the verses we will examine, the Greek word for "sword" is *machaira*. Historians have used this word to denote a bronze, Greek fighting knife, having a curved blade and a convex cutting edge. This fact, however, should not limit our thinking concerning how this word is used in the Scriptures. *Machaira* (possibly the origin of "machete," the heavy-bladed knife used for chopping sugar cane or jungle foliage) comes from the root word

*mache*, which connotes battle, fighting, and striving. It was most likely a general term for a fighting weapon, and, being made of bronze, was probably shorter than what we think of as a sword. Since bronze is cast, rather than forged, it was difficult to produce a dependable bronze weapon over three feet in length that was not prone to breakage. This lack of length causes many to deem these weapons to be too short to be swords, hence, some Bible versions translate *machaira* as "dagger."

There is more to a sword, though, than its length and what it looks like. Iron may be forged to produce many sizes and shapes, from the practical to the absurdly ridiculous. Though the shapes of swords differ, they have always commanded authority. This is what the word "sword" conveys in Romans 13:4b, where the Bible states, "...he beareth not the sword [*machaira*] in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil." A "revenger" is an "extractor of full justice." This is the authority that came to be associated with swords, thus, today we are familiar with the image of the blindfolded "Lady Justice," wielding her sword.

The use of swords to denote authority has been widespread throughout history. From laws forbidding all but nobles from carrying swords; to the bestowing of knighthood by the dubbing of a sword; to the crowning

of a monarch, swords have played a central, ceremonial role. Even our military personnel still wear dress swords to show their authority to defend this nation.

For the Romans, the sword of their authority was the *gladius*. With the aid of its 19-inch blade, they expanded their empire, but the size and shape of a sword is only important if it's used correctly. If your sword is ineffective, you either need a new one or you need to use it differently. To use a sword well, to understand its strengths and weaknesses, one must expend the effort and dedication necessary to learn. Indeed, skillful swordsmanship must be honed until it is as sharp as the blade itself. Ancient warriors often believed their weapons had spirits, and by working with these spirits, the sword would do what they wanted. Our "sword," on the other hand, involves The Spirit, Almighty God.

### **Ephesians 6:17**

*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword [machaira] of the Spirit, which is the word [rhema] of God:*

The Greek term translated "word" in this verse is *rhema*, used of a saying, speech, or something spoken or expressed. *Rhema* is the root of modern English words like "rhetoric" and "rhetorical." "Rhetoric" is the art of public speaking, and the spoken communication itself. Does this mean the "sword of the spirit" is the whole Bible, since it is all "God-breathed," (II Tim. 3:16) or is it merely that part which we speak into our lives? I would say that it's both. All of The Word has purpose and use in our lives. We study it so we know that which we need in order to defeat the Adversary in any aspect of our lives.

### **Hebrews 4:12**

*For the word [logos] of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any ["every"] twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner ["critic"] of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

Here, "word" is from *logos* in the Greek texts, an entirely different term than that which God used in Ephesians. Both Ephesians 6:17 and Hebrews 4:12 contain the phrase "the word of God," but *rhema* is rendered "word" in Ephesians, while *logos* is translated "word" here in Hebrews. By this, God is giving His people a deeper understanding of the multi-faceted nature of His Word (Examine "manifold" in Ephesians 3:10.). We noted earlier that *rhema* indicates a saying

or expression. *Logos* (from which we derive "logic" and "logistics"), on the other hand, implies "reason" or the "intellect" behind what is spoken, that is, God's reasoning. This demonstrates the versatility of The Word, and shows that "the sword of the spirit" is a well-made weapon. It is quick (living) and powerful (energetic) and very, very sharp.

The Greek word for "sharper" is *tomoteros*, from the root *temno*, which means, "to cut." (See "dividing" in II Timothy 2:15.) It bespeaks of a keen ability to cut with a single stroke. This sharpness is compared to "every" two-edged sword. "Twoedged" is *distomos* in the Greek, and could be rendered "twice-cut." Possibly, its use is not to indicate a sword with two edges, but, rather, one that is twice as "sharp."

Keeping in mind that the comparative word "sharper" implies "with a single stroke," let's see what the Word of God can cut. "Piercing" is the Greek word *diikneomai*, which means, to penetrate thoroughly, far enough to divide. The first "dividing" is between soul and spirit, between the breath-life animating our bodies and spirit (whether it be the spirit from God or a devil spirit). The second is between the joints and marrow, that is, the point where these things are anatomically connected. Furthermore, the conjunction "and" in the phrases "soul and spirit" and "the joints and marrow" is rendered from *two* Greek words, not one. The second word, which the translators have not represented in the text, is the word "both." The phrases accurately read, "...piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, and of both the joints and marrow,..." This further emphasizes the sharpness of the "sword." Lastly, God's Word can discern, critique, know the difference between, the thoughts (deliberations) and intents (motives stemming from moral understanding) of the human heart.

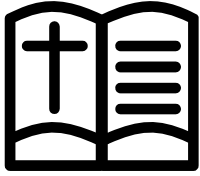
The Word of God is our spiritual sword. It is a powerful, and very sharp, offensive weapon. With a single stroke, it divides asunder, cutting a broad swath through Satan's wilderness, or deftly and surgically removing a hindrance, allowing God's deliverance to unfold. It is a perfect, God-breathed "sword" that we may learn to wield expertly, as we grow in the knowledge and wisdom of God. The more we live The Word and the love of God, the better "swordsmen" we will be.\*

*(Mr. Keith Jamison oversees The Ryburn Christian Clarion's Research Department, regularly developing material for the "From The Research Department" and "Investigating Creation Science" columns.)*

To submit an article, fax the *Clarion* at..... (937) 276-5534.

***“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:”***

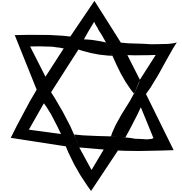
Ephesians 6:17



**GOD**

And

**Country**



*(In this column, appearing in every summer and winter issue of The Ryburn Christian Clarion, our editor-in-chief, Rick Heeter, will explore the Judeo-Christian heritage of America and her social and political institutions. Through this running commentary, we will discover where we came from as a people, and how we can preserve our unique cultural identity and the liberties it fosters.)*

## “New Light For The New World”

*by Rick Heeter*

**T**HUS FAR, WE HAVE journeyed into the mists of the past, noting the benevolent influences of the Almighty in the affairs of believing men. We have seen that mankind, for all its good intentions, has regularly gone through cycles of obeying God, followed by periods of debauchery. God, however, has managed to continually preserve and nurture a remnant of souls that endeavor to stay faithful to Him.

We went on to discuss the fulfillment of the Old Covenant as the Savior completed His Father’s business, ushering in an age in which all who believe may receive an unbreakable link with the Creator. As Christianity spread, we noted the erosion of understanding that eventually gave way to systematized worship instead of a true relationship with the Father. Additionally, we witnessed a later burgeoning of Biblical understanding, along with scientific discovery, as Medieval Europe roused itself to embrace the Renaissance. We have even tantalized you with intriguing insights from Christopher Columbus’ journal, promising to present further evidence of his Christian motives in later columns. In short, we have brought our readers to the brink of the most monumental and salient moment in history since the First Century, and it is here that we pause.

We pause because much of who and what we are today as Americans is the result of a foundation that had its beginnings in pre-Reformation Europe. To believe that it was merely luck that long-lost scriptural insight was restored to men even as the wilderness of the New World was opening to settlement is sheer folly. Even the most obtuse mind can grasp the workings of the Lord in the unfolding of Middle Ages events in Europe. It is to these that we turn our attention, examining a litany of facts that affect our society to this day.

Before proceeding, however, we should restate the premise upon which our assertions rest. Unlike the nihilist, who believes history is composed of random events having no significance, or the Deist, who perceives God as sovereign but uninvolved in the lives of men, we trust in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:3 and 17), Who has often involved Himself in the affairs of His people. God’s loving concern has been shown in

many ways: in His provision of a favorable environment in which to thrive; in the revealing of His purposes and divine nature through the Scriptures; and, most notably, by the sacrifice of His dear Son for the sake of us all. Furthermore, we contend that His involvement has continued in post-Biblical times, and most especially where the written Word of God is concerned.

God has always watched over His Word, even from the day it was first inscribed in stone. By inspiring Israel, He ensured that the 39 Hebrew books of the Old Testament were completed five centuries before Christ. Even after the known world was conquered by Alexander the Great, God saw to it that the Hebrew scrolls were translated into Greek in what is known as the Septuagint.

The New Testament revelations, as well, were recorded before the end of the First Century. By 315 A.D., these 27 books had been canonized by Athanasius of Alexandria, Egypt. It was around this time that false doctrines were officially adopted into the preaching of the Gospel, but God continued to protect His written Word for future days when the Scriptures would again be given their proper place in the lives of men.

As men of The Church ignorantly preached and practiced many things contrary to The Word, the manuscripts continued to be preserved and copied into many languages. In 382 A.D., Jerome completed his translation of God’s Word into Latin, which became the official language of The Church around 600 A.D. By compromise, in order to draw converts, Christendom gradually drifted from its moorings until a massive institutionalized religion stood in place of the genuine ministry of The Word,...but God continued to preserve the writings. A day and time would come when there would be “new light” to enliven the souls of the New World.\*

*(Join us in every summer and winter issue of The Ryburn Christian Clarion for a look at the Judeo-Christian foundations of America.)*

*(Mr. Rick Heeter is the editor-in-chief, book reviewer, and a columnist for The Ryburn Christian Clarion.)*

*\*Articles and columns submitted to The Ryburn Christian Clarion are edited to ensure correct spelling and punctuation, proper grammar, and clarity of expression.*